

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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UNCLAS TEHRAN 00143

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IR PFOR
SUBJ: SHAH EXPRESSES RESERVATIONS ABOUT A PALESTINIAN
STATE

1. ON JANUARY 3 LOCAL TV WIDELY CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH THE
SHAH BY ABC CORRESPONDENT BARBARA WALTERS (WHO ACCOMPANIED THE
CARTER GROUP TO TEHRAN) IN WHICH THE SHAH SAID HE HAS
"VERY GRAVE RESERVATIONS,....VERY GRAVE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT
SOMETHING LIKE (AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE). MY VIEWS
ARE THAT OBVIOUSLY WE HAVE GOT TO FIND A FORMULA, AND SOME KIND
OF SUPERVISION TO LET THE PEOPLE OF THAT REGION SPEAK FOR
THEMSELVES. A BETTER SOLUTION IS SOMETHING THAT THE PEOPLE WILL
DECIDE AND THEY COULD BE LINKED TO JORDAN."

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2. EXCERPTS OF INTERVIEW APPEARED IN ALL LOCAL
DAILIES JANUARY 4. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE
QUESTION OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND THE ENTRY
OF NON-RESIDENT PALESTINIANS TO THE WEST BANK WAS
"A GRAVE ONE", THE SHAH SAID THAT IF PALESTINIANS
WERE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN LEBANON IT WOULD "RUIN"
THAT COUNTRY. ADMITTING THAT THERE WAS ALSO A PROBLEM

OF HOW MANY NEW PEOPLE THE WEST BANK COULD ABSORB,
HE CONFESSED HE DID NOT HAVE AN ANSWER TO THAT DILEMMA.
3. THE SHAH STATED HE BELIEVES PRIME MINISTER BEGIN IS MORE
INFLEXIBLE THAN PRESIDENT SADAT, AND THAT BEGIN'S PROPOSALS
ARE UNWORKABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE "TOO TOUGH" AND HAVE ALREADY
BEEN UNIVERSALLY REJECTED BY THE ARABS.

4. WITH REGARD TO KING HUSSEIN'S ROLE IN THE PEACE
EFFORTS, THE SHAH SAID THE KING HAD BEEN PREVENTED "BY ALL"
FROM PARTICIPATING. HE ADDED, "YOU SEE, IN RABAT, THE ARAB
COUNTRIES DECIDED A FEW THINGS...ABSOLUTELY NO ROLE WAS LEFT
FOR KING HUSSEIN." ASKED WHETHER HUSSEIN RATHER THAN ARAFAT
SHOULD REPRESENT THE PALESTINIANS, THE SHAH RESPONDED THAT
HUSSEIN IS A RESPONSIBLE LEADER WHO "AT LEAST, IS THE ONE WHO
CAN REPRESENT THE TERRITORY THAT WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM JORDAN,
THAT IS THE WEST BANK." AS FOR HIMSELF, THE SHAH SAID HE DOES
NOT ENVISAGE ANY DEFINITE ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE
EFFORTS BUT THAT HE TRIES TO HELP WHEN HE CAN.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION REGARDING RUMORS OF FOREIGN
MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN'S VISIT TO IRAN, THE SHAH REPLIED,
"THERE ARE MANY REPORTS CIRCULATING NOWADAYS. IF WE WANTED TO
COMMENT ON THOSE REPORTS, WE WOULD ISSUE A COMMUNIQUE." HE ADDED
THAT THERE WERE NO PLANS "NOW" FOR DAYAN TO VISIT IRAN.

6. TURNING TO ANOTHER TOPIC, THE SHAH CHARACTERIZED RECENT STUDY
EMANATING FROM THE JACKSON COMMITTEE CONSULTANTS ON IRAN'S
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ROLE IN THE FULF AS "OBVIOUSLY EXAGGERATED." IRAN'S
OFFICIAL POLICY, THE SHAH ADDED, IS THAT "IF ANY COUNTRY IN THE
REGION ASKS FOR OUR HELP, WE WILL GIVE IT TO THEM, AS LONG AS
THEY WANT IT, AND NOT ONE MINUTE MORE." WHILE HE HAS NO WORRIES
ABOUT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT AND SEES NO SIGN OF A RADICAL
CHANGE IN RIYADH, THE SHAH DOES PERCEIVE THAT "NEGATIVE ELEMENTS
EVERYWHERE ARE CAUSING TURMOIL. EVERYWHERE THEY TRY TO MAKE SOME
MISCHIEF AND SOMEHOW ALL THE ELEMENTS OF TROUBLE ARE ON THE LOOSE,
SO EVERY COUNTRY SHOULD EXPECT THESE ELEMENTS TO TRY TO
FOMENT SOME TROUBLE."

7. THE SHAH DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE RECENT VISIT OF
PRESIDENT CARTER, SAYING THAT ANY STATEMENT SHOULD COME FROM
THE US. ASKED WHETHER THE US WAS SELLING WEAPONS TO IRAN
PARTLY IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE GOI TO DEFEND US INTERESTS, THE
SHAH RESPONDED, "I CANNOT REALLY SEE WHAT THAT MEANS. BUT IF
YOU SAY THAT WE ARE ALLIES, YOU CAN SAY WE ARE ALLIES." IN A
RELATED ANSWER, HE SAID: "YOU CANNOT ACHIEVE PEACE THROUGH
WEAKNESS. YOU CAN REMAIN DECENT. YOU CAN REMAIN RESPECTED IF
FIRST OF ALL YOUR INTENTIONS ARE GOOD AND, SECONDLY, IF YOU
DO NOT SHRINK FROM DIFFICULTIES."

8. COMMENT: IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, AND RELAXED IN AN ARMCHAIR
TOE-TO-TOE WITH HIS INTERVIEWER, THE SHAH PRESENTED A SOMEWHAT
MORE HOMEY IMAGE THAN ON MANY PAST OCCASIONS, HE
ALSO HESITATED BEFORE ANSWERING MOST QUESTIONS,
A USEFUL TV TECHNIQUE--THOUGH HIS HISITATION
WAS EXCEPTIONALLY LONG PRIOR TO THE
ANSWER RE A PALESTINIAN STATE.
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